

(54) Process for the purification of factor VIII and factor VIII obtained by said process.

(57) A method for the purification of Factor VIII from human plasma is described, wherein a solution comprising Factor VIII is purified by using ion exchange chromatographic columns. Factor VIII obtained by said method is also described.

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TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a process for the purification of Factor VIII from human plasma comprising treating a solution containing Factor VIII with a ion exchange chromatographic column applying as equilibrating buffer and as eluent for the adsorbed Factor VIII high ionic strength saline solutions at acid pH and collecting the eluate in presence of stabilizers and optionally of an antiprotease.

STATE OF THE ART

The increasing importance attained by Factor VIII in the substitution therapy of haemophilia A has rendered highly desirable the development of processes enabling said product to be obtained in amount and purity higher and higher. The so far followed conventional obtaining processes, which are essentially based on centrifugation, precipitation, chromatography and filtration techniques and which start from a cryoprecipitate [see N. Heimburger, H. Schwinn, P. Gratz, G. Luben, G. Kumppe and B. Herchenham: "Factor VIII concentrate, highly purified and heat-treated in solution" *Arzneim.-Forsch./Drug research* 31 (1), 4, 619-622 (1981); S.W. Herring, K.T. Shitanishi, K.E. Moody and R.K. Enns: "Isolation of human factor VIII: C by preparative high-performance size-exclusion chromatography" *J. of Chromatography* 326: 217-224 (1985); H. Schwinn, A. Smith and D. Wolter: "Progress in purification of virus-inactivated Factor VIII concentrates" *Arzneim.-Forsch./Drug Research* 39(II) 10 (1989)] allow a product to be obtained, showing a specific activity usually ranging from 2 to 100 U.I. Factor VIII: C per mg protein and in any case not fully satisfactory. On the other hand the cloning and/or purifying processes using immuno-affinity chromatography [see D.B. Brettler, A.D. Forserberg, P.H. Levine, J. Feltio, K. Lamou and J. Sullivan: "Factor VIII: C concentrate purified from plasma using monoclonal antibodies: human studies" *Blood*, 73, 1859-1863 (1989); L.O. Anderson, N. Forsman, K. Huang, K. Larsen, A. Lundin, B. Pavlu, H. Sandberg, K. Sewerin and J. Smart: "Isolation and characterisation of human Factor VIII concentrate: molecular forms in commercial Factor VIII concentrate, cryoprecipitate and plasma" *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 83, 2979-2983 (1986); M. Morfini, D. Rafanelli, E. Filimberti, S. Cionotti, E. Piazza, G. Longo and P. Rossi Ferrini: "Protein content and factor VIII complex in untreated, treated and monoclonal factor VIII concentrates" *Thrombosis Research*, 56, 169-178 (1989)] allow indeed a product of remarkable specific activity to be obtained, but however show the serious drawback of a likely contamination by virus, heterogeneous proteins and DNA residues from the host cell. Thus the product obtained by such processes needs to be thoroughly purified and tested to verify the absence of likely contaminants before its administration. The need of a developed process allowing the production of a product of higher specific activity but free of the aforementioned drawbacks is therefore evident.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The process according to the present invention enables a Factor VIII of very high purity (specific activity higher than 300 U.I./mg protein) and free of the above mentioned drawbacks to be obtained, by making use of a ion exchange chromatography process and applying high ionic strength saline solutions at acid pH, which permit the removal of undesired proteins without however destabilizing the biological activity. Following such a treatment the osmolality and concentration conditions of the solution are restored and the solution is stabilized and pasteurized according to known techniques. The process of chromatographic purification of the invention is carried out by using chromatographic columns containing an anion exchange resin as Q-Sepharose fast flow (Pharmacia) and an equilibration buffer (TC) consisting of 10-30 mM Tris, 150-300 mM NaCl, 5-15 mM CaCl_2 at pH 6.4 - 6.8. The chromatography is operated at flow rate of 20 - 30 cm/h (by a diameter/height of the column ratio of 1/3/4) and loading 10 - 20 mg protein per ml resin. The solution comprising Factor VIII at specific activity of 1.6 - 2 U.I. is fed into the column; unbound proteins and the von Willebrand factor are removed by washing the resin with the aforementioned TC buffer and Factor VIII: C adsorbed upon the resin is eluted with an elution buffer (TE) consisting of 10 - 30 mM Tris, 450 - 650 mM NaCl, 5 - 15 mM CaCl_2 , pH 6.4 - 6.8. Factor VIII: C solution eluted from the column is collected and stabilized with:

Albumin 5 %	0.2 - 1.25 mg/ml eluted solution,
heparin	0.02 - 0.125 U.I./ml eluted solution,
PEG 4000	0.006 mg/ml eluted solution

and optionally also lysine or histidine 10 mM solution as antiprotease. The disclosed process allows at least 150 time increase in purity of the solution with a recovery higher than 80 % calculated on the starting product. The stabilized eluate is concentrated, dialyzed and further concentrated up to a final volume of 1/4 of the initial volume. The solution is then stabilized with PEG 4,000 to the end concentration of 0.7 g/l and finally it may either be frozen as such or submitted to pasteurisation, desalting, concentration, distribution into vials and lyophilisation according to method well known in the technique. Further advantages and features of the present invention will be more properly understood in the light of the following not limiting example.

EXAMPLE:

1° STAGE:

About 2000 l fresh frozen human plasma are thawed with continuous stirring, up to a temperature of 0° C in a 2500 l vessel equipped with water cooling jacket at 20°-30° C. The cryoprecipitate (CP) is collected by cold precipitation on a low speed centrifuge, type Westfalia (6000 - 8000 rpm), or high speed, type Sharples (12000 - 17000 rpm) fed with a membrane pump at speed varying from 14 to 20 l per minute, depending on the diameter of the rotor. The obtained cryoprecipitate (yield 8 - 10 gr/l) may either be immediately subjected to the next purification phase or frozen (at -80° C) in aliquots of about 1 Kg each and arranged in 2 cm thick slabs.

2° STAGE:

Each kilogram cryoprecipitate is solubilized at 25°-30° C, for about one hour with gentle stirring, with 3 - 4 volumes distilled water comprising 3-60 U.I. heparin per ml final solution. A 2 % water suspension of aluminium hydroxide maintained at the same temperature is added always with stirring to the solution (160 ml/Kg cryoprecipitate). Polyethylenglycol 4000 (PEG) is then added at the concentration from 2.5 - 4 % and the contact is maintained for about 20 - 30 minutes with gentle stirring. The pH of the solution is adjusted to 6.4 - 6.6 with 1 N acetic acid and the solution is then cooled at 9°-11° C. By means of low speed centrifugation the proteins adsorbed upon aluminium hydroxide and the cold insoluble proteins precipitated with PEG are removed. The precipitate represents a waste product (which can be used as starting material for the purification of other proteins, such as fibrinogen and fibrin glue), whereas the supernatant, i.e. Factor VIII solution, is further purified in the next stage.

3° STAGE:

The solution described in the previous stage, obtained as seen by conventional techniques and having specific activity of 1 - 2 U.I./mg protein, is loaded onto a chromatography column, containing an anion exchange resin, having the following features:

- a) diameter/height column ratio 1/ 3/4;
- b) applied resin: Q-Sepharose fast flow (Pharmacia);
- c) equilibration buffer (TC): 20 mM Tris, 250 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂, pH 6.6;
- d) flow rate 24.5 cm/h (constant for the different chromatographic phase);
- e) allimentation 18 - 20 U.I. factor VIII / ml resin corresponding to 10 - 20 mg protein / ml resin.

The unbound proteins are removed by washing the resin with 3 - 5 column volumes TC buffer. Factor VIII adsorbed upon the resin is eluted with 4 column volumes elution buffer TE 20 mM Tris, 550 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂, pH 6.6. The Factor VIII solution eluted from the column is collected in a vessel and the following stabilizers are added thereto:

Albumin 5 %	0.2 - 1.25 mg/ml eluted,
heparin	0.02 - 0.125 U.I./ml eluted,
PEG 4000	0.006 mg/ml eluted.

The stabilized eluate is then concentrated to 1/2 volume, dialyzed versus two volumes 0.1 M glycine, 0.13 M NaCl, 0.005 M Na₃ citrate buffer pH 7, and further concentrated to 1/2 volume (final volume = 1/4 of the starting volume) paying attention to equilibrate the membranes of the ultrafiltration system with the

elution buffer TE. For the ultrafiltration system hollow fibre cartridges with cutoff 30 Kd and surface not lower than 0.1 - 0.2 m² per kg of starting cryoprecipitate are used. The solution, stabilized with PEG 4000, to the final concentration of 0.7 gr/l may either be frozen at -80° C or further processed as described according to the stages hereinafter, which are conventional operative techniques.

4° STAGE:

The solution of pure Factor VIII is stabilized with :

glycine	60	gr/kg solution.
lysine	145.9	gr/kg solution.
CaCl ₂ · 2H ₂ O	0.294	gr/kg solution.

saccharose 1.2 kg/kg solution.

During the addition (as listed) of the stabilizers, the pH of the solution is adjusted and maintained at 7.45 - 7.55 with NaOH 1N. Should frozen Factor VIII solutions be used in this stage, they firstly need to be thawed and brought at 25° C, then stirred at such a temperature for about one hour before being stabilized. The stabilized solution is maintained with stirring at 35° C for about one hour in order to achieve the complete solubilisation of saccharose (perfectly clear solution), thereafter it is pasteurized at 60° C ± 1° C for 10 hours. After pasteurisation the solution is slowly cooled (at least 15 minutes to 50° C), then it is filtered on clarifying filter and diluted 1:1 (v/v) with 0.13 M NaCl, 0.1 M glycine buffer, pH 7.1 q1 (TF).

5° STAGE:

The diluted solution is concentrated to the starting volume (before stabilisation) by means of a hollow fibre ultrafiltration system, with cutoff 30 Kd and a surface not lower than 0.1 - 0.2 m² per kg of starting cryoprecipitate. The stabilizers are removed and then, the physiological conditions of the solution are reestablished by diafiltration versus 2.5 volume buffer TF. The final solution is concentrated up to the desired values of U.I./ml, filtrated on clarifying filters and sterilized on 0.2 µ pore sterilizing filters. The sterile solution is thereafter aseptically dispensed into vials and frozen at -40° C. The vials are then lyophilized by low pressure slow temperature increase from -40° C to +30° C. The features of Factor VIII obtained by the present process are reported in Table I.

TABLE I

5	IU.I. factor VIII: C/ml	100 - 120 U.I. / ml
	Total proteins	4.9 - 5.3 mg / ml
	Added albumin as stabilizer	4.8 - 5.0 mg / ml
10	Residue proteins from process	0.1 - 0.3 mg / ml
	Specific activity before stabilisation,	
15	U.I. VIII:C/protein	300 - 1200
	Specific activity after	
	albumin stabilisation	18 - 24
20	U.I. antigen von Willebrand (vw:RAg)	< 25 U.I. / ml
	vw:RAg / VIII:C Ratio	< 0.4
25	Fibrinogen content	< 0.06 mg / ml
	Fibronectin content	< 0.001 mg / ml
	IgG content	< 0.004 mg / ml
30	IgA content	< 0.005 mg / ml
	IgM content	< 0.002 mg / ml

Claims

1. Process for the purification of Factor VIII from human plasma comprising treating a solution containing Factor VIII with a ion exchange chromatographic column applying as equilibrating buffer and as eluent for the adsorbed Factor VIII high ionic strength saline solutions at acid pH and collecting the eluate in presence of stabilizers and optionally of an antiprotease.
2. Process according to claim 1, wherein the resin is an anion exchange resin.
3. Process according to claim 2, wherein the ion exchange resin comprises quaternary amino groups.
4. Process according to claims 1 to 3, wherein the equilibrating buffer consists of 10-30 mM Tris, 150-300 mM NaCl, 5-15 mM CaCl₂ and pH is comprised from 6.4 and 6.8.
5. Process according to claim 4, wherein the equilibrating buffer consists of 20 mM Tris, 250 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂ and pH 6.6.
6. Process according to claims 1 to 5, wherein the eluent for Factor VIII consists of 10-30 mM Tris, 450-650 mM NaCl, 5-15 mM CaCl₂ and pH is comprised from 6.4 and 6.8.
7. Process according to claim 6, wherein the eluent for Factor VIII is 20 mM Tris, 550 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂ and pH 6.6.

8. Process according to claims 1 to 7, wherein the eluted Factor VIII is stabilized with:
- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Albumin 5 % | 0.2 - 1.25 mg/ml eluate, |
| heparin | 0.02 - 0.125 U.I.g/ml eluate, |
| PEG 4000 | 0.006 mg/ml eluate and optionally an |
| antiprotease | |
9. Process according to claim 8, wherein lysine or histidine are used as antiprotease.
10. Process according to claim 9, wherein the antiprotease is used in concentration 10 mM.
11. Process according to claims 1 to 10, wherein:
- A) Human fresh frozen plasma is thawed with stirring, collecting the cryoprecipitate by centrifugation.
- B) The cryoprecipitate is solubilized in distilled heparinized water, the solution is treated with an aluminium hydroxide suspension and then with PEG 4000, the pH is adjusted with acetic acid 1 N to a value 6.4-6.6 and the solution is thereafter cooled to 9° -11° C; the proteins adsorbed upon aluminium hydroxide and those precipitated are then removed by centrifugation.
- C) The supernatant obtained in the previous stage is treated on chromatographic column containing an anion exchange resin by using an equilibrating buffer 20 mM Tris, 250 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂ and pH 6.6; the resin is then washed with the aforementioned buffer in order to eliminate the undesired proteins and the factor von Willebrand and Factor VIII:C is then recovered by eluting with 20 mM Tris, 550 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂ and pH 6.6; the so obtained Factor VIII is stabilized with
12. Process according to claim 11, wherein the equilibrating buffer consists of 20 mM Tris, 250 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂ and pH 6.6
13. Process according to claim 11, wherein the eluent buffer for Factor VIII is 20 mM Tris, 550 mM NaCl, 10 mM CaCl₂ and pH 6.6.
14. Factor VIII obtained according to the processes of claims 1 to 13.
15. Factor VIII according to claim 14, having specific activity higher than 300 U.I. / mg protein.
16. Use of Factor VIII according to claims 14 and 15 for the preparation of pharmaceutical compositions useful in the substitution therapy of haemophilia A.

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

EP 91 10 9496

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT					
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)	
A	WD-A-8 604 486 (NEW YORK UNIVERSITY) * page 9, line 21 - page 11, line 4; claims 1-3, 8-12, 20-23; example 1 * * page 12, line 24 - page 13, line 15 *	1-16	C07K3/22 C07K3/28 C07K15/06 A61K37/02		
X	US-A-4 361 509 (T.S. ZIMMERMAN ET AL.) * column 3, line 66 - column 4, line 2; table 1 -----	14-16			
P, X	EP-A-0 383 645 (ASSOCIATION D'AQUITAINE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DE LA TRANSFUSION SANGUINE ET DES RECHERCHES HEMATOLOGIQUES) * page 3, line 9 - page 4, line 54; claims; example 1 *	1-16		SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)	C07K A61K
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims					
Place of search		Date of completion of the search		Examiner	
THE HAGUE		24 APRIL 1992		RYCKEBOSCH A.O.	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS					
I : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons A : technological background Q : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category V : prior art document U : non-patent literature T : international patent classification symbol					